

FEAR

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR[®]



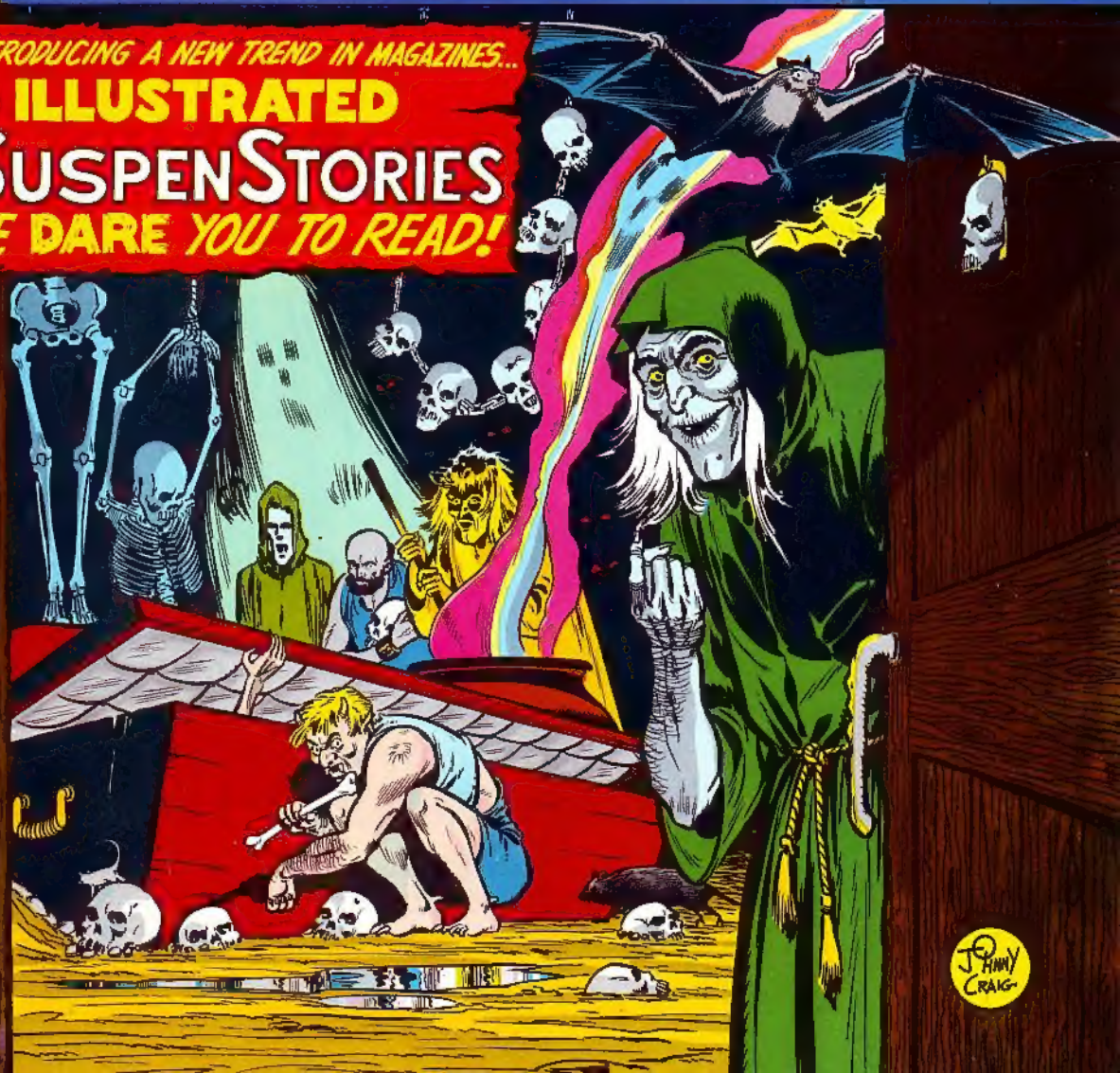
NO. 15
MAY • JUNE
A.K.A.
NO. 1



REPRINT
EDITION

INTRODUCING A NEW TREND IN MAGAZINES...

ILLUSTRATED
SUSPENSE STORIES
WE DARE YOU TO READ!



JOHNNY
CRAIG

The

WALL

A
PSYCHOLOGICAL
STUDY



J. FINNY
CRAIG

MY NAME IS NEAL HARPER. CLARA AND I WERE A HAPPILY MARRIED COUPLE... ONCE! BUT SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF SNOOKY, HATE SEEPED INTO THE HOUSEHOLD AND SLOWLY BEGAN TO DISINTERGRATE OUR LOVE. I WAS FRUSTRATED AT EVERY MOVE, AT EVERY TURN... AND SNOOKY WAS ALWAYS TO BLAME! YOU SEE, SNOOKY WAS CLARA'S PET CAT...

DON'T SAY "NO" TO ME, YOU WORM! I DON'T CARE HOW FAR IT IS TO THE GROCERS! YOU GO! SNOOKY WANTS SOME MILK BEFORE I PUT HER TO BED!

Y-YES, DEAR... I'M SORRY... I... I'LL GO...



AND THAT'S HOW IT WAS! CLARA'S LOVE AND AFFECTION WERE NOW CENTERED ON SNOOKY... AND I WAS LITERALLY "OUT IN THE COLD!"



IT WAS ALWAYS THE SAME...

NEAL HARPER, DON'T YOU DARE GO NEAR YOUR CHAIR WHILE SNOOKY IS SITTING IN IT!

YES, DEAR...



I WASN'T THE BOLD, ASSERTIVE TYPE WHO WOULD FIGHT BACK... PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE DONE MUCH GOOD ANYWAY... NOT AGAINST CLARA...

YOU PUT THAT CREAM RIGHT BACK WHERE YOU FOUND IT! IT'S SNOOKY'S! I BOUGHT SKIM MILK FOR YOU!

YES, DEAR...



THAT MANGY CAT!! I BEGAN TO LOATHE IT! HOW I WISHED I HAD THE NERVE TO WRING ITS NECK!

B- BUT IT'S MY BED...

I'M SORRY, NEAL! YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO SLEEP ON THE LIVING-ROOM COUCH FOR TONIGHT! SNOOKY WAS SLEEPING THERE FIRST, AND I DON'T WANT TO DISTURB HER...



... ALWAYS THE SAME! DON'T DO THIS! DON'T DO THAT! SNOOKY THIS, SNOOKY THAT! AND IT CONTINUALLY GREW WORSE UNTIL I HATED THAT CAT SO MUCH, IT NEARLY DROVE ME TO FRENZY!



HMM-M... I STARTED
THIS BOOK SOME TIME
AGO! I THINK I'LL
FINISH IT TONIGHT...



GET OUT OF MY CHAIR, YOU
CONFOUNDED CAT!

NEAL!



YOU BEAST! PICKING ON
POOR LIDDEW SNOOKY!
COME HERE, YOU
POOR THING...



SNOOKY! SNOOKY!
SNOOKY! THAT'S ALL I
HEAR AROUND THIS PLACE!
YOU AND YOUR BLASTED
CAT! YOU'RE DRIVING ME
CRAZY!



IS MY LIDDEW SNOOKY
ALL RIGHT NOW? POOR
DARLING, YOU'RE SO
FRIGHTENED, AREN'T
YOU? POOR, POOR
SNOOKY...

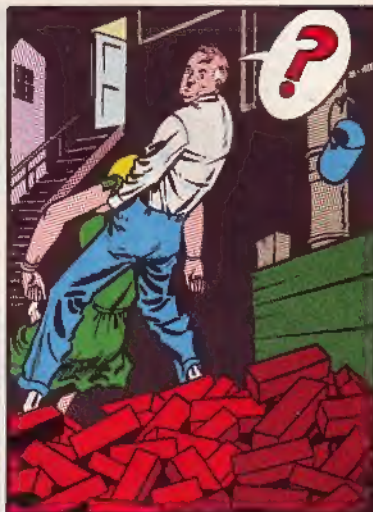


"POOR, POOR SNOOKY!!"
HA! SHE'S CAUSED
NOTHING BUT TROUBLE
EVER SINCE SHE CAME
HERE, AND I'M GOING TO
STOP IT **ONCE AND FOR ALL!**

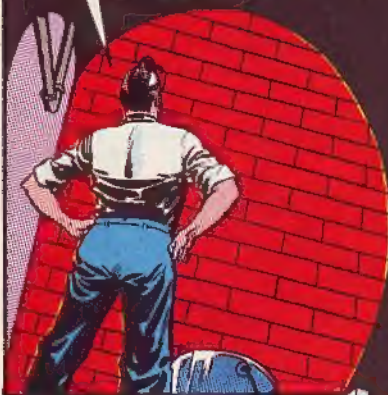


GLARA... GLARA...
CLARA!
SHE'S
DEAD!





THERE! I'M FINISHED! I FEEL BETTER
NOW THAT SHE'S OUT OF THE WAY!
HA! NOW TO FIND SNOOKY...
AND KILL HER...



I SEARCHED THE HOUSE FROM CELLAR TO ATTIC! I COULDN'T FIND
SNOOKY! AGAIN I SEARCHED... MORE CAREFULLY THIS TIME, AND STILL
COULDN'T FIND HER! SHE WASN'T IN THE HOUSE...

BLAST IT! WHERE IS THAT CAT?!
NOT IN THE HOUSE... I RANSACKED
THIS PLACE SEVERAL TIMES...
WAIT!



THE WALL!... THE WALL WHERE CLARA
IS BURIED! SNOOKY WAS TRYING TO
GET BEHIND IT... MAYBE SHE SNEAKED
OVER THE WALL WHEN I WASN'T
LOOKING... ???



THAT *MUST* BE WHAT HAPPENED!
SNOOKY WANTED TO BE WITH CLARA!
HA! HA! NOW THEY'LL BE TO-
GETHER... FOREVER!
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

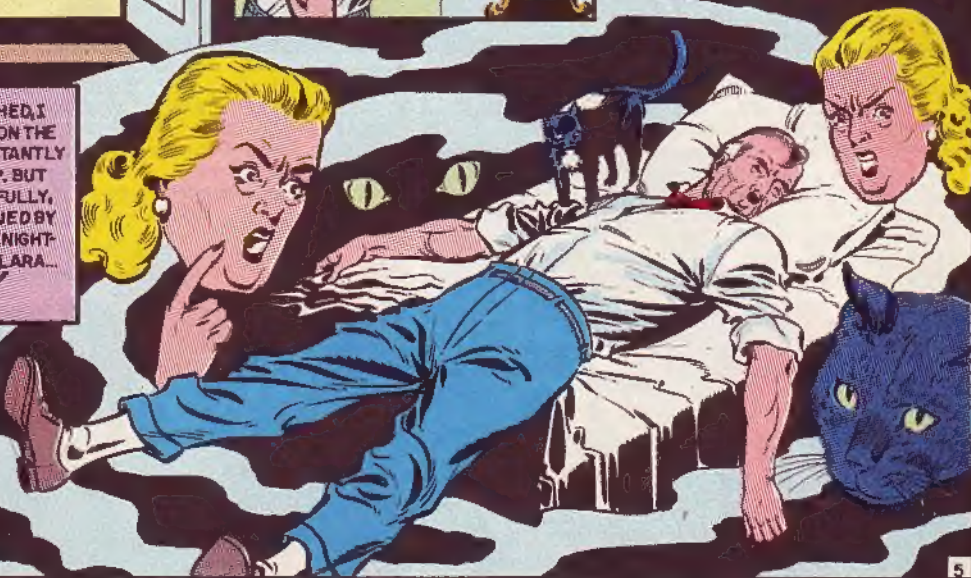


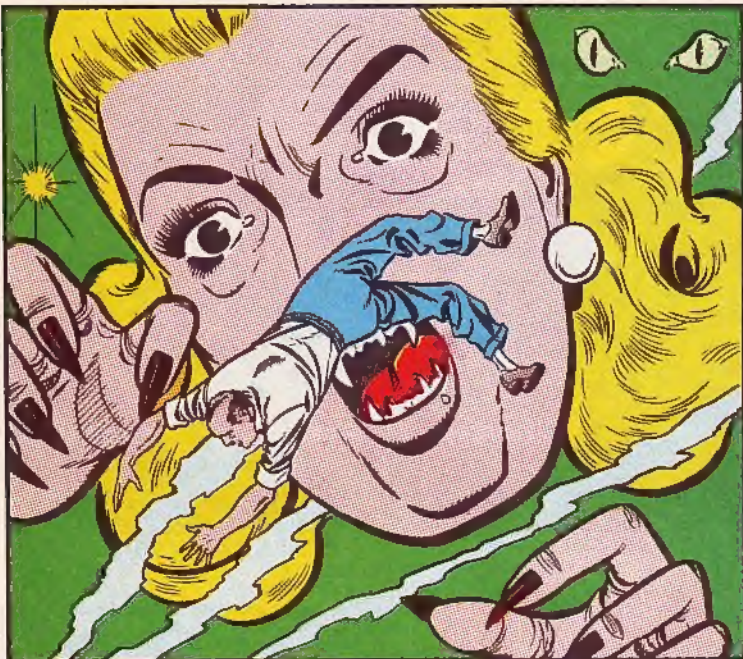
SUDDENLY I FELT EXHAUSTED. NOW
THAT IT WAS ALL OVER, I BEGAN TO
TREMBLE SLIGHTLY! THE FEAR OF
KILLING CLARA AND SNOOKY WAS
NOW OVERTAKING ME...

I... I MUST CONTROL
MYSELF!... NEED REST...
I'LL... I'LL SLEEP...
GO TO BED!



FULLY CLOTHED, I
COLLAPSED ON THE
BED AND INSTANTLY
WAS ASLEEP. BUT
I SLEPT FITFULLY,
BEING PLAGUED BY
TERRIFYING NIGHT-
MARES OF CLARA...
AND CATS!





I AWOKE NEXT MORNING. I FELT WRETCHED. I HAD SLEPT LONG, BUT NOT WELL... NOT WELL AT ALL!

OH--H... THOSE DREAMS! THEY COMPLETELY UNNERVED ME! I... I'M A NERVOUS WRECK! MAYBE A DRINK WILL HELP...



A CAT! I'D HEARD A CAT! SNOOKY WAS CALLING FOR HER FREEDOM... FOR HER LIFE! SHE KNEW THAT IN A SHORT WHILE, SHE WOULD DIE FROM LACK OF OXYGEN...

HA! HA! YOU DON'T LIKE BEING IN THERE WITH GLARA, DO YOU, SNOOKY? WELL, YOU'LL SOON BE QUIET... AND EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE...



BUT SNOOKY *DIDN'T* KEEP QUIET! SHE YOWLED AND SCREAMED INTERMINABLY... *SHE WOULDN'T DIE!* DAY AFTER DAY, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, I HEARD HER PIERCING WAILS UNTIL MY NERVES WERE ON THE VERGE OF SPLITTING...

SHUT UP, DO YOU HEAR?
SHUT UP, IN THERE!
STOP IT! STOP IT!
STOP IT!



SHE WOULDN'T STOP! SNOOKY WAS CRYING OUT HER LIVID HATE FOR ME! SHE WOULDN'T DIE! SHE WOULDN'T DIE! AND NO MATTER WHERE I WENT IN THE HOUSE, I HEARD HER...SCREAMING HER RAGE AT ME...

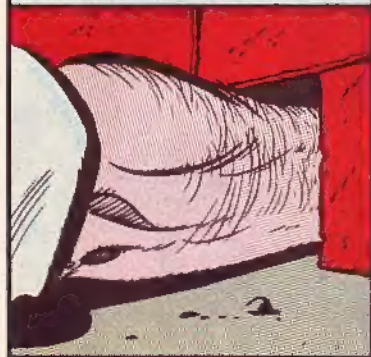
I COULDN'T STAND IT! FINALLY, I DECIDED I WOULD HAVE TO KILL HER MYSELF...I WENT TO THE CELLAR...



I STRETCHED MY ARM THROUGH THE OPENING...A TIGHT SQUEEZE...

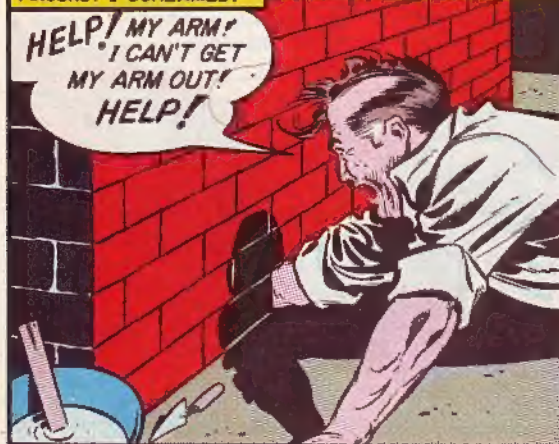
MY HAND GROPED ABOUT SEARCHINGLY...TRYING TO GRASP THE CAT...

AND THEN...



SHE BIT ME! THEN IN QUICK SUCCESSION, HER CLAWS RIPPED THROUGH MY FLESH, HER FANGS GNAWED MY HAND AND FINGERS! I SCREAMED!

MY ARM WAS BEING RIPPED AND TORN! I FELT WAVES OF KNIFING PAIN SURGE THROUGH ME...WARM BLOOD TRICKLED OVER MY ARM, THROUGH MY FINGERS! WARM, STICKY! SNOOKY WOULDN'T LET GO! SHE HAD ME AND WAS GOING TO KILL ME! I COULDN'T GET FREE! SHE WAS TEARING ME TO SHREDS!?



WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?



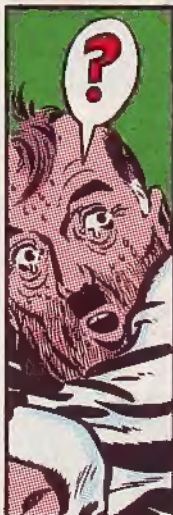
OFFICERS... SOMEONE? HELP ME!
SNOOKY... EATING MY ARM TO
PIECES!... HELP! PLEASE... GET
ME FREE! I'LL DIE!



OKAY, MISTER! GRAB THAT PICK,
JOE! WE'LL HAVE TO KNOCK
DOWN THAT BRICK WALL!

TAKE IT EASY,
MISTER... WE'LL
HAVE YOUR
ARM FREE IN
A JIFFY!

HURRY! I'M
BEING EATEN
ALIVE! I'M...
???



SNOOKY...

OKAY, BUD... YOU CAN
PULL YOUR ARM FREE
NOW...



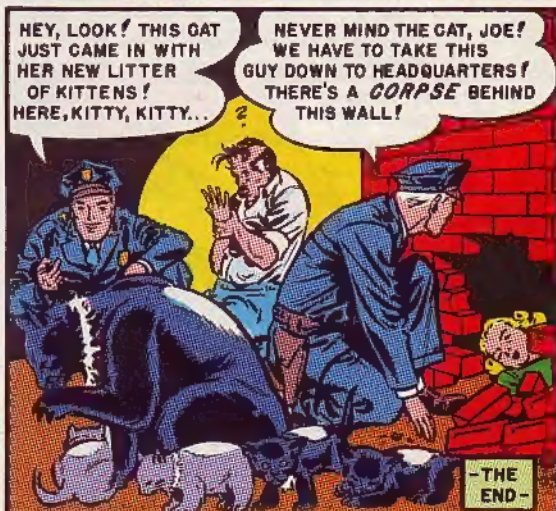
SNOOKY... WASN'T BEHIND THE
WALL... WASN'T EVEN IN THE
HOUSE... OUT HAVING KITTENS!
SNOOKY'S PIERCING SHRIEKS...
THEY WERE ONLY IN MY MIND!
I... I ONLY IMAGINED THEM!

THIS GUY'S BATTY!
THERE'S NOTHING
WRONG WITH HIS
ARM AT ALL!



HEY, LOOK! THIS CAT
JUST CAME IN WITH
HER NEW LITTER
OF KITTENS!
HERE, KITTY, KITTY...

NEVER MIND THE CAT, JOE!
WE HAVE TO TAKE THIS
GUY DOWN TO HEADQUARTERS!
THERE'S A CORPSE BEHIND
THIS WALL!



-THE
END-

IT WAS THE MOST UNUSUAL FRATERNITY INITIATION EVER SEEN ON THE CAMPUS. . . OR ON ANY OTHER CAMPUS, FOR THAT MATTER! THE THREE PLEDGEES WERE TAKEN OUT TO THE OLD PALMER HOME ON THAT INFAMOUS NIGHT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, AND INSTEAD OF THE PLACE BEING AMUSINGLY HAUNTED, IT TURNED INTO A---

HOUSE OF HORROR



IT WAS ON A NIGHT IN 1934 THAT THIS STRANGE TALE HAD ITS BEGINNING! TODAY, FIFTEEN YEARS LATER, THERE IS STILL NO EXPLANATION FOR WHAT HAPPENED AT THE PALMER PLACE!

GET A LOAD OF LES WILTON BACK THERE...SCARING THE WITS OUT OF THOSE POOR FRESHMEN!



HE'S GONE ABOUT PREPARING THIS HOUSE FOR THE INITIATION AS IF IT WERE THE CLOSING SECONDS OF THE BIG GAME!

HE CLAIMS THAT EVEN IF IT WAS JUST AN OLD DUMP BEFORE... IT'S HAUNTED NOW!



AND AS THE LAST STEP IN YOUR HAZING, BOYS... YOU'LL HAVE TO PASS THE TEST OF COURAGE! A LONELY JOURNEY INTO THE OLD PALMER PLACE WHICH LEGEND TELLS US IS **HAUNTED!**



EACH ONE OF YOU WILL FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS I GAVE ON THE RIDE OUT HERE! IF ANYONE WANTS TO DROP OUT NOW... LET HIM SPEAK UP OR SHUT HIS MOUTH FOREVER! EVERYONE READY..?

Y-YES...I-I GUESS SO...



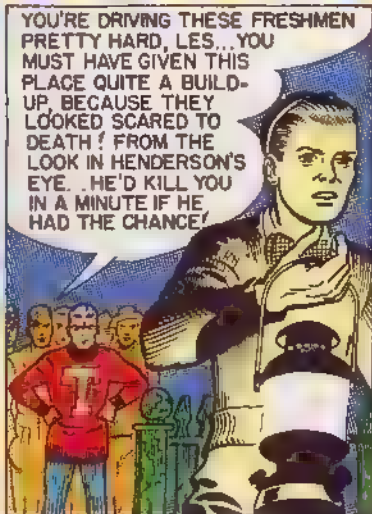
HERE'S YOUR LIGHT, HENDERSON... YOU MIGHT AS WELL START THE BALL ROLLING! AND REST ASSURED OF ONE THING, BOYS... THIS IS NO SCHOOLBOY PRANK, AS YOU'LL SOON LEARN! HEH, HEH?



WAVE THAT LANTERN AT US FROM THE FIRST AND SECOND LANDINGS... AND JUST COOL YOUR HEELS IN THE ATTIC TILL I COME UP FOR YOU IF YOU'RE NOT ALREADY BATHED IN COLD SWEAT, THAT IS!

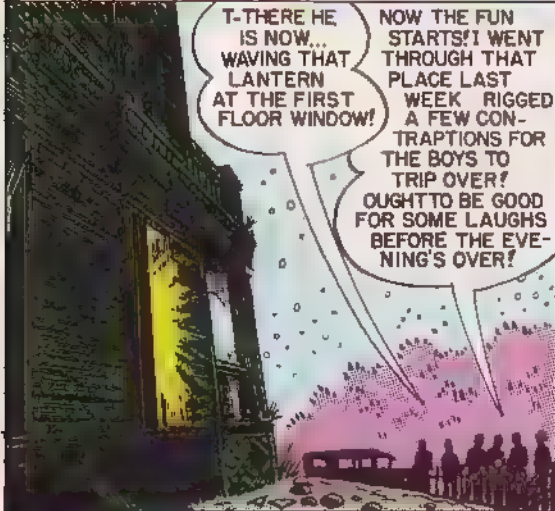


YOU'RE DRIVING THESE FRESHMEN PRETTY HARD, LES... YOU MUST HAVE GIVEN THIS PLACE QUITE A BUILD-UP BECAUSE THEY LOOKED SCARED TO DEATH! FROM THE LOOK IN HENDERSON'S EYE... HE'D KILL YOU IN A MINUTE IF HE HAD THE CHANCE!



T-THERE HE IS NOW... WAVING THAT LANTERN AT THE FIRST FLOOR WINDOW!

NOW THE FUN STARTS! I WENT THROUGH THAT PLACE LAST WEEK RIGGED A FEW CONTRAPTIONS FOR THE BOYS TO TRIP OVER! OUGHT TO BE GOOD FOR SOME LAUGHS BEFORE THE EVENING'S OVER!



THERE HE IS AGAIN... POOR KID MUST HAVE RAN ALL THE WAY UP TO THE SECOND FLOOR! AS IF THERE WAS A GHOST BEHIND 'IM!



THERE MAY BE MORE THAN GHOSTS BEHIND 'IM BOYS HEH, HEH!

ONE OF 'EM MAY HAVE GOTTEN HENDERSON THEN... 'CAUSE IT'S BEEN SEVERAL MINUTES SINCE WE SAW HIM AT THE SECOND FLOOR...AND IT DOESN'T TAKE THAT LONG TO GET UP TO THE ATTIC!

JUST A BOYISH PRANK, THAT'S ALL! THINKS HE'LL TURN THE TABLES AND SCARE US A BIT! PROBABLY SITTING UP THERE IN THE ATTIC WAITING TO JUMP OUT AND YELL BOO AT ME WHEN I COME UP TO RELIEVE HIM!

SO WE'LL HAVE A LITTLE CHANGE OF PLANS TO MEET THE EMERGENCY! INSTEAD OF LES WILTON GOING UP THERE WE'LL PICK THE SECOND PLEDGEE! HEY... WATERS!

M-ME? Y-YEAH... BE RIGHT THERE!

I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DID IT... BUT WILTON'S GOT THESE FRESH-MEN SHAKING IN THEIR BOOTS! NO GUY WOULD NORMALLY TREMBLE AT THE THOUGHT OF A HAUNTED HOUSE... UNLESS HE THOUGHT THERE WAS DIRTY WORK AFOOT!

HMMM MAYBE THERE IS!

HEH HEH! LOOK AT HIS FACE, WILL YOU! IMAGINE THAT... A GROWN MAN, SHAKING LIKE A TEEN-AGE GAL GOING PAST A GRAVEYARD!

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT I WOULDN'T LIKE THIS SET-UP MYSELF!

WHAT IN THE WORLD DID YOU DO TO THAT HOUSE, WILTON? THESE BOYS HAVE A LOOK OF ABSOLUTE DREAD ON THEIR FACES!

AW, IT'S NOTHING! JUST A COUPLA LOOSE STEPS... A FEW COBWEBS... SOME SQUEAKY DOORS...

I-IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN... WATERS NEVER REACHED THAT ATTIC WINDOW! I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS...

AW. THEY PROBABLY TURNED RIGHT AROUND FROM THE SECOND FLOOR... AN WE'LL FIND 'EM HIDING NEAR THE FRONT DOOR! IF THESE GUYS HAVEN'T THE GUTS TO GO UP THERE... THEN THEY'RE NOT FIT TO BE GAMMA DELTAS!

YOU... ARLING... G'MON OVER HERE!
YOU'RE NEXT, MAN... GO UP TO THAT
ATTIC AND TELL THOSE PALS OF
YOURS TO STOP THEIR MONKEY-
SHINES! THIS IS A FRATERNITY
INITIATION... NOT A SCHOOLBOY
PRANK!



HEH, HEH! LOOK AT 'IM SHAKING!
BET THE OTHER TWO'LL HAVE
A BIG SURPRISE FOR ARLING...
THINKING IT'S THEIR BELOVED
LES WILTON!

MAYBE THE
KID'S RIGHT, LES
MAYBE SOME-
THING *DID* GO
WRONG UP
THERE!



I-I DON'T
THINK I...
I G... CARE
TO GO!

YOU'LL GO ALL RIGHT...
OR THEY'LL FIND YOU
IN A DITCH! I DIDN'T
RIG UP THIS PLACE
JUST TO HAVE A
COUPLA PUNKS SPOIL
OUR FUN! IF THE
THREE OF YOU ARE
PLANNING TO GIVE
ME A SCARE... YOU'LL
REGRET IT!



RATS! NOTHING'S WRONG UP
THERE... ARLING'S AT THE FIRST
FLOOR SAFE AND SOUND! FROM
THE LOOK ON HIS FACE HE MUST
HAVE STUMBLED OVER THAT
SKELETON I BORROWED FROM
THE LAB, TOO!



W WE DIDN'T PLAN ANY JOKES
LIKE T... THAT! AND I DON'T LIKE
THE LOOKS OF THIS... IT'S N...
NOT LIKE WATERS AND HENDER-
SON TO FOOL AROUND! B... BUT
I'LL GO!

SPOKEN LIKE A
REAL GAMMA
DELT-TO BE!



HE'S AT THE
SECOND
FLOOR...

ON HIS WAY TO THE
ATTIC! HOLD YOUR
BREATH, BOYS...
HERE'S WHERE THE
REAL FUN BEGINS...
IN THE NEXT SIXTY
SECONDS.



FIVE MINUTES,
WILTON... AND
NO SIGN OF
ARLING! ALL
THREE OF 'EM...
GONE!

THE STUPID PUNKS... TOO YELLOW TO
TAKE THAT LAST FLIGHT OF STEPS!
I'LL SHOW 'EM *REAL* FEAR...



GIMME THAT LIGHT, JENKINS... I'LL GO UP THERE MYSELF! FIRST TO PROVE TO ALL OF YOU THAT THERE'S NO DANGER UP THERE... AND SECOND, TO KICK THOSE GUYS OUT OF THAT PLACE... AND OUT OF THE GAMMA DELTA!



MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE LET WILTON PLAN THIS WHOLE INITIATION BY HIMSELF? HE'S LIABLE TO GO OVERBOARD ON THIS HAZING BUSINESS... THE BOYS IN THAT HOUSE MAY HAVE HURT THEMSELVES!

FOR ALL WE KNOW HE MIGHT HAVE STUCK SOME RATTLESNAKES IN THE OLD DUMP!



CRASH!

W...WHAT TH...?



I TOLD YOU I DIDN'T LIKE THIS WHOLE SET-UP! THE WINDOW... IT'S BEEN SMASHED!

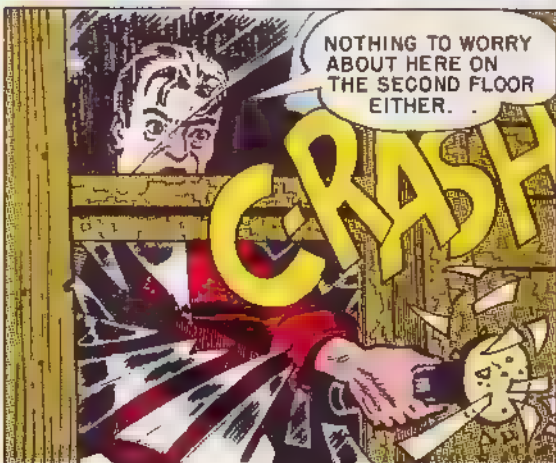
I...IT'S WILTON...

THOUGHT I'D INJECT A LITTLE EXCITEMENT INTO THIS INITIATION... DO I LOOK ANY THE WORSE FOR WEAR?



NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT HERE ON THE SECOND FLOOR EITHER.

CRASH



FIFTEEN MINUTES SINCE WE SAW WILTON!

T...THERE *IS* SOMETHING WRONG UP THERE!



THE SECONDS TICKED BY IN THAT LONELY AREA KNOWN AS PALMER'S PLACE... SECONDS BECAME MINUTES... AND THE MINUTES STRETCHED INTERMINABLY...

SOMETHING'S GOING ON IN THAT HOUSE THAT WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT! AND THE WAY THOSE THREE FRESHMAN HATED WILTON... THEY MAY HAVE GIVEN HIM A BAD BEATING!

I... I HOPE IT'S ONLY THAT! LET'S HURRY!



WE'LL COMB THIS PLACE UNTIL WE FIND ALL FOUR OF 'EM! MIKE... FRED... SEARCH EACH ROOM WITH A FINE-TOOTH COMB! WE'LL GET THIS THING STRAIGHTENED OUT IF IT TAKES THE REST OF THE NIGHT!



NOT A TRACE OF ANYONE IN THE FRONT ROOM...

OR ANY OF THE OTHERS EITHER! THE DUST WASN'T EVEN DISTURBED!

AND OUTSIDE, NO FOOT-PRINTS! WHICH MEANS THEY'RE ALL STILL IN THE HOUSE!



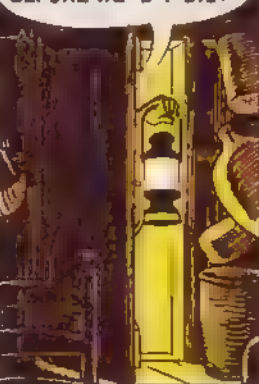
NO ONE ON THE SECOND FLOOR EITHER! AND SINCE NO ONE COULD HAVE LEFT THE HOUSE... THEY MUST ALL BE UP THERE!

T... THE ATTIC!



T...THIS IS PROBABLY WILTON'S IDEA OF A JOKE... HAZING THE WHOLE BUNCH OF US! W. WELL... HERE GOES...

T...THE DOOR...IT OPENS EASILY! AS IF SOMEONE ELSE OPENED IT BEFORE WE D... DID!



G-GOOD HEAVENS!

I...IT'S WILTON! H...HE'S AGED FIFTY YEARS IN THE LAST FEW MINUTES... H...HIS HAIR...IT'S TURNED WHITE!

H...HE LOOKS AS IF HE'S GONE INSANE! LISTEN TO HIS MOANING!



NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS... NEVER EVEN HEARD OF ITS EQUAL! THAT WILTON KID... CAN'T GET A COHERENT WORD OUT OF HIM! HIS MIND... IT'S CRACKED... HE'S COMPLETELY INSANE! AND THE OTHERS... VANISHED!

WITHIN HALF-AN-HOUR THE POLICE HAD ARRIVED AT PALMER'S PLACE... AND A THOROUGH SEARCH OF THE PREMISES REVEALED ONE STARTLING FACT



AGAIN AND AGAIN THE POLICE SEARCHED THE BUILDING THE NEXT FEW DAYS BUT NO FURTHER INFORMATION WAS UNCOVERED... AND THEN ABOUT A WEEK AFTER THE NIGHT OF HORROR...

THERE SHE GOES... CONSIGNED TO FLAMES BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONER! AND WITH IT... THE LAST TRACE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ARLING, WATERS AND HENDERSON!



FIFTEEN YEARS AGO IT HAPPENED. AND NO EXPLANATION HAS EVER BEEN FOUND AS TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE THREE FRESHMEN OR WHAT AWFUL HORRORS LES WILTON SAW IN THE MOMENTS BEFORE HIS MIND CRUMBLLED!

OUT OF THE GRAVE

The Thing stirred slowly, the dirt against its mouth and body. It pushed upward, clawing. Slowly the earth gave way, and clean fresh air seeped down into the shallow grave . . .

He got to his feet clumsily. Stood erect in the moonlight, seeing the trees all around him, hearing the croaking of the bullfrogs by the lake-shore. The wind rustled his rotting garments. He lifted his head, stood listening. He could not hear that cry now. But down there, down in that shallow grave where he had lain for weeks, he had heard a scream. A scream that made him seek the open air.

He was dead. He knew that. But inside him there was a power that let him move, that stirred his rotting legs and arms, that let his sightless eyes see and his shredded ears hear.

Who was he? He did not remember his name, or anything about himself. The fact that he could see and walk, that something had summoned him, was all he could know.

He moved forward at a stumbling walk. He must find whatever it was that brought him back from the dead, that made him walk the earth again, a horrible figment from a distorted nightmare.

When he came to the lake, he stared at his reflection in the limpid, still waters. He had no nose, and bits of flesh clung here and there to whitened skull that was beginning to show through. Where his eyes should have been, there were only twin

black hollows. And his teeth gleamed white and hungry, because he had no lips.

He lifted his head. This time he heard it. A scream!

He started straight toward it, walking into the cold water, not feeling it. He stumbled over submerged logs and rocks, but he kept walking at that slow, steady pace. Stumbling forward, always moving.

* * *

The man tied a gag around her lips so she could not scream again. He said, "It's all over, Marie. No sense yelling. No one can hear you in these woods. That's why my little cabin here comes in so handy. I -ah- write finish to a few of my better jobs."

"Jim," the girl whimpered, arching her neck to avoid the gag. "Jim will save me. You can't kill me . . . Jim will save me."

The man laughed. "Jim is dead, Marie. I killed him. If I hadn't finished him, maybe I couldn't get rid of you. He would come after me . . . try to get revenge. This way, it's safe."

"Jim said he would protect me. That . . . wherever he was . . . he would know when I was in danger and come to save me!"

The man tied the gag so she could not speak again. Her wrists and legs were tied to a heavy log chair. The man stood back and nodded.

"With you out of the way, Marie, your inheritance will revert to me,

your cousin. It will be very legal. I will wait seven years and have you declared legally dead. In the meantime, I will enjoy the estate as its trustee. I will not hurry. I am not too greedy. No one will ever know I killed you!"

The man went to a coal stove and lifted out a pine branch smeared with pitch. The branch was flaming, the red tongues of fire casting a scarlet glow around the room. He went and touched the blazing branch to the tiny bed, to the rug on the floor and the curtains on the window. The room caught fire. It swirled up, hot and eager, eating the logs and the furniture. He had prepared well. Everything was drenched in kerosene.

The man tossed the burning tree-limb on the floor. He backed out the door; stood there a minute, watching the fire leap and roar.

"Two and a half million dollars," he said to the wide-eyed, almost fainting girl. "That's what I'm getting out of this. I buried your Jim a few miles back in the densest part of these woods. Maybe the fire I'm starting will burn him too . . . because the woods will go up like paper!"

The heat was awful. The man turned and ran.

From the fringe of the trees, he saw the Thing coming at its stumbling, shambling gait. The Thing was looking at the burning cabin. It did not see him. The man put his hands over his mouth. He was sick. He whimpered, "Jim . . ."

The Thing went into the fire. He did not feel it licking at his clothes, at his rotting flesh. He was dead. He could not feel anything.

There! Right in front of him. He did not know the girl had fainted merci-

fully just before he came in the door. He did not remember who the girl was. All he knew was that a long time ago, in a different world, he had promised that no harm would come to her!

He picked the girl up, chair and all. He turned and went toward the door. His clothes flamed. His hair was gone. Even the dried strips of flesh still clinging to his body were charred. Here and there a white bit of bone protruded. Where the fire had touched the bone, it was black and scorched.

The man crouching in the underbrush screamed and screamed. He screamed as the Thing put the girl down far away from the fire. He screamed as the Thing turned its fleshless face toward him. He screamed and tried to flee as the Thing shambled toward him.

The Thing picked him up and held him clutched to the rotting chest. He went at his steady, remorseless pace, onward and onward, through the forest, carrying the man who would have inherited two and a half million dollars.

The man tried to fight, but the Thing was strong. He held the man easily.

He was still holding him when he came back to the grave. The Thing fell on top of the man, pinned him in the grave with his heavy weight.

And the Thing began, with one rotting hand, to fill the grave with loosened dirt, burying them both.

It did not take long to fill the grave. Before long, there would be two dead men in it. It was nice to have company down here where everything was cold and black.

After a while the screaming stopped. . . .

BORIS PETAJA WAS SKILLED IN THE TRICKS OF ANCIENT AND MODERN MAGIC. HIS HANDS MOVED AND HIS VOICE CALLED ON THE SPIRITS TO AID HIM. DEEP DOWN IN HIS BRAIN, SOMETHING STIRRED AND WHISPERED, THAT HIS MAGIC WAS NOT FAKED... BUT REAL! AND BROODING, BORIS PETAJA BECAME...

THE MAD MAGICIAN



FOOLS! IF THEY ONLY KNEW THAT WHAT THEY THINK IS TRICKERY CAN BE DONE JUST AS WELL WITHOUT STAGE PROPS!

AS HE BOWED TO THE APPLAUSE OF A CHEERING AUDIENCE, THE MAGICIAN SMILED GOLDLY TO HIMSELF...

I SHALL PROVE IT TO THE WORLD... I, BORIS PETAJA! TONIGHT I WILL SAW A MAN IN TWO... AND THEN PUT HIM TOGETHER AGAIN... WITH NO FALSE-BOTTOMED CABINET TO HELP ME!

STAGE ENTRANCE

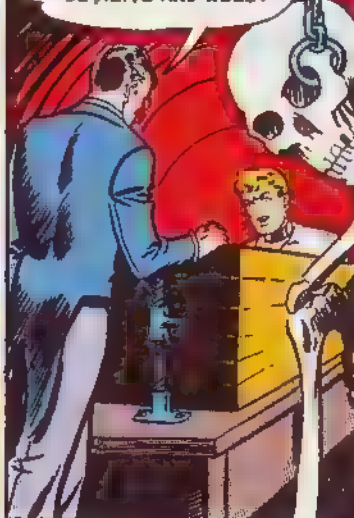


FAR UP IN THE HILLS BEYOND METROPOLIS CITY, A STONE-WALLED MANSION NESTLED. ITS EYRIES SWARMED WITH BATS WITHIN ITS WALLS, FROM TIME TO TIME, SCREAMS OF AGONY HAD BEEN HEARD...

TONIGHT IS THE BIG EXPERIMENT! THE MAN I DRUGGED ON THAT MOUNTAIN ROAD IS IN CHAINS... AWAITING THE TEST. THE POWER IS ON FULL. THE ELECTRIC SAW HAS BEEN SHARPENED!

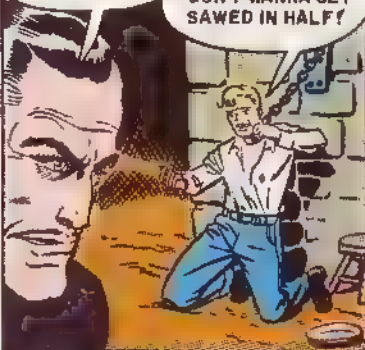


DO YOU DOUBT MY MAGICAL POWERS? I SAY YOU WILL NOT BE HURT! MY POWER IS SUCH THAT EVEN AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN SAWED IN HALF, YOU WILL BE ALIVE AND WELL!



GOOD EVENING, SIR. I HURRIED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE! NOW WE WILL BEGIN...

LOOK, MISTER. PLEASE...LEMMIE GO! I DON'T WANT TO BE FAMOUS LIKE YOU TOLD ME... I DON'T WANNA GET SAWED IN HALF!



SLOWLY BORIS PETAJA SET ABOUT HIS WORK. THE LIGHTS DIMMED AS THE POWERFUL SAW WHIRLED AND BUZZED. WITH FURROWS OF CONCENTRATION HE MOVED THE SAW FORWARD...

THE NEXT FEW MINUTES WILL TELL THE STORY OF MY GREATEST SUCCESS!



TWO WEEKS LATER, MILES AWAY IN METROPOLIS CITY, REPORTER JIM CRANE AND HIS PRETTY WIFE PACK UP TO TRAVEL EASTWARD...

I THINK THIS IS THE BREAK I'VE BEEN AFTER, HONEY. A COLUMN ALL MY OWN!!

BUT I WISH WE WEREN'T DRIVING. I...I HAVE A STRANGE FEELING... THAT SOMETHING **AWFUL** IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO... **ONE OF US!**



DARLING, YOU'RE SO QUIET. YOU AREN'T FRIGHTENED, ARE YOU?

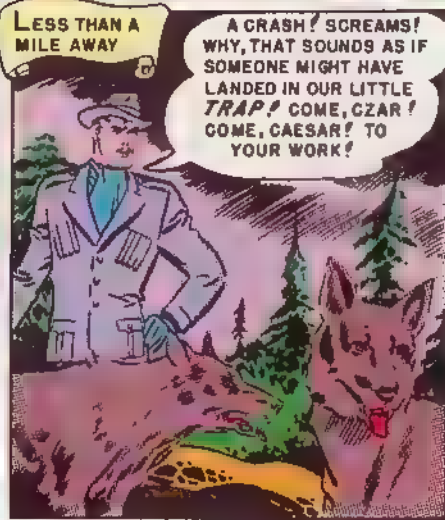
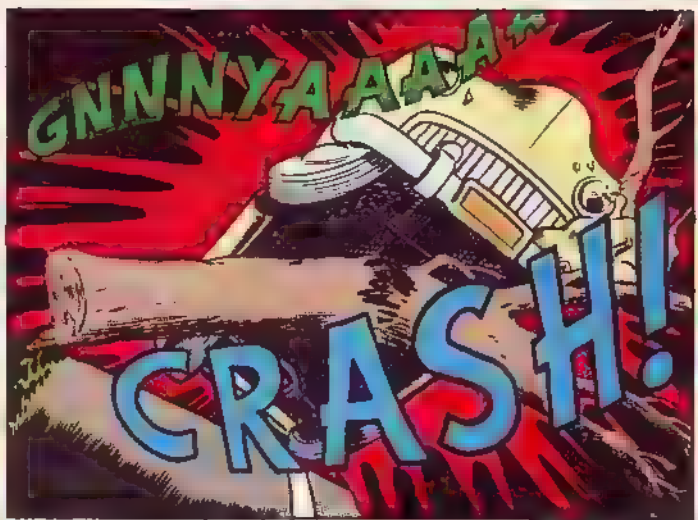
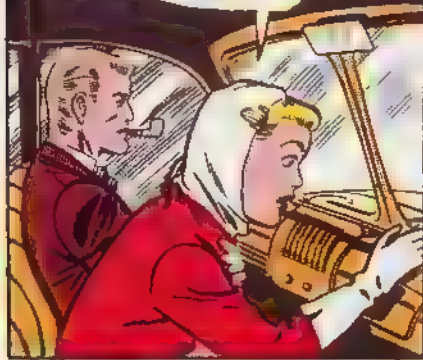
WELL, THE POLICE FOUND A MAN'S BODY JUST ABOUT HERE, JIM. IT WAS... **SAWED IN HALF!** JIM... THAT'S SO HORRIBLE! I'VE DREAMED OF... THAT BODY! JIM... **I'M SCARED!**



HOURS LATER, THEY WERE HIGH IN THE WOODLANDS. THE SMOOTH PURR OF THE MOTOR IS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE WEIRD CRY OF A PROWLING GAT..

WHAT COULD HAPPEN?

I DON'T KNOW. BUT THIS SECTION OF THE MOUNTAINS IS SO REMOTE ... WHY, A MADMAN COULD LIVE HERE AND NEVER EVEN BE SUSPECTED! JIM--LOOK OUT!



LESS THAN A MILE AWAY

A CRASH! SCREAMS! WHY, THAT SOUNDS AS IF SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE LANDED IN OUR LITTLE TRAP! COME, CZAR! COME, CAESAR! TO YOUR WORK!



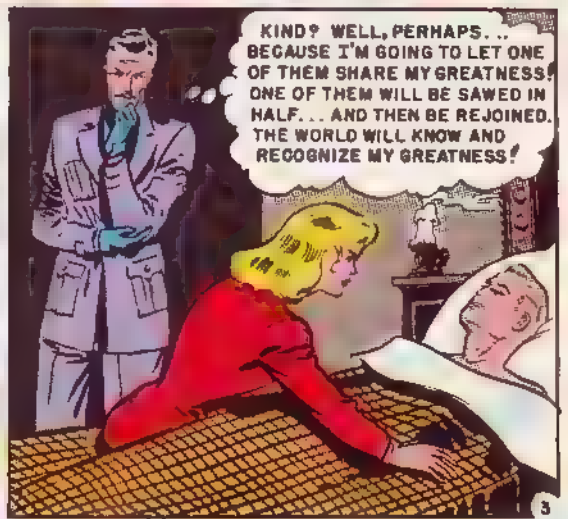
YOU'VE HAD AN ACCIDENT, BUT MY HOME IS NEARBY. COME, LET ME HELP YOU UP.

MY... HUSBAND? IS HE... ALL RIGHT?



A NIGHT'S REST WILL MAKE HIM AS GOOD AS NEW! LUCKILY, I HAVE PLENTY OF ROOM!

YOU'RE SO KIND



KIND? WELL, PERHAPS... BECAUSE I'M GOING TO LET ONE OF THEM SHARE MY GREATNESS! ONE OF THEM WILL BE SAWED IN HALF... AND THEN BE REJOINED. THE WORLD WILL KNOW AND RECOGNIZE MY GREATNESS!

I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A WRITEUP IN MY COLUMN, PETAJA! YOU'RE A MAGICIAN OF A HOST!

AH, JIM...THANK YOU! AND TO PLEASE YOUR TASTE EVEN MORE, HERE IS SOME CHATEAU YQUEM SAUTERNE... 1911. RATHER RARE, BUT YOU'LL THINK YOU'RE DRINKING AMBROSIA...

AS HE CHATS ON, BORIS PETAJA'S NIMBLE FINGERS... SKILLED WITH THE DEFT PRACTICE OF LONG YEARS OF MAGICAL MYSTERY...DROP TINY POWDER-PILLS INTO THE GLEAMING GLASSES...

THAT NIGHT BORIS PETAJA PLAYED THE GAY HOST. HIS QUIPS AND WITTICISMS, THE EXCELLENT FOOD AND IMPORTED WINES THAT DECORATED HIS TABLE CONVINCED HIS GUESTS THAT HE WAS EVERYTHING HE SEEMED...

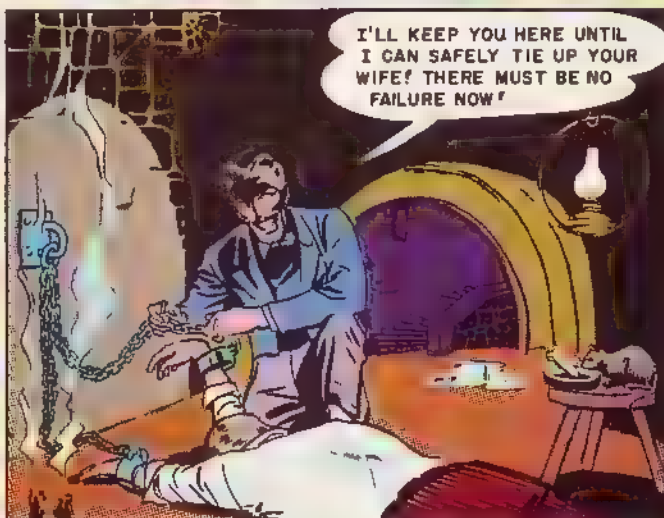


LESS THAN TEN MINUTES LATER...

AH, THIS IS SPLENDID! TWO SLEEPING GUESTS, TWO HELPERS WAITING TO MAKE THE NAME OF BORIS PETAJA THE GREATEST OF ALL IN THE ANNALS OF MAGICIANS!



I'LL KEEP YOU HERE UNTIL I CAN SAFELY TIE UP YOUR WIFE! THERE MUST BE NO FAILURE NOW!



WHY, I...MUST HAVE DOZED OFF...JIM'S GONE, AND SO IS PETAJA! I FEEL SO ODD...

MY DEAR, YOU SHOULD REST. YOUR HUSBAND IS ALREADY DOWNSTAIRS. YOU MUST SLEEP UNTIL THE EXPERIMENT IS OVER.

HE WILL NOT BE HURT, BECAUSE I WILL PUT HIM TOGETHER AGAIN.. AFTER I HAVE SAWED HIM IN HALF!

HE'S MAD... MAD!

I'VE GOT TO GET TO JIM...TO SAVE HIM!

WATCH OUT! OHHHH!



AND THEN, FOR THE FIRST TIME, ALICE CRANE SAW THE OVER-BRIGHT EYES, THE SLACK LIPS, THE SHAKING HANDS OF A MADMAN. HER EARS LISTENED, HORRIFIED.





ALMOST NUMB WITH FEAR, ALICE CRANE FLED INTO THE NIGHT...



SHE MUST NOT REVEAL MY SECRETS UNTIL THEY ARE READY FOR ALL THE WORLD TO HEAR! EVEN IF SHE *DIES*, MY SECRET MUST BE SAFE!



TO THE ROLL AND RUMBLE OF DISTANT THUNDER, TO THE SPLITTING OF THE DARK SKY BY BRILLIANT LIGHTNING, ALICE RAN ON, BREATH SOBBING IN HER STRAINING LUNGS...

I MUSTN'T LET HIM... CATCH ME! I'VE GOT TO... WARN THE POLICE...OF WHAT HE INTENDS TO DO!



I'LL GET HER... BY THROWING THE AXE!

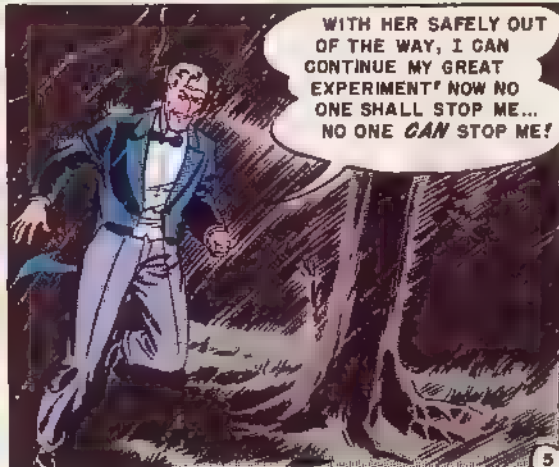


THUD!



MANIACAL LAUGHTER SOUNDS ECHO TO HER WILD SCREAM OF TERROR AS ALICE HURTTLES DOWNWARD...

HA! HA! NOW SHE'LL NEVER BETRAY THE GREAT SECRETS OF BORIS PETAJA!



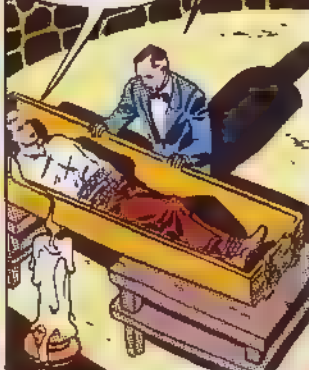
WITH HER SAFELY OUT OF THE WAY, I CAN CONTINUE MY GREAT EXPERIMENT! NOW NO ONE SHALL STOP ME... NO ONE *CAN* STOP ME!

MY PARTNER IS STILL FASTENED TIGHTLY! AND HE IS RECOVERING FROM THE DRUG. GOOD! HE CAN LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND AS I EXPLAIN MY THEORIES...



AWAKE, EH? THEN YOU'LL BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING THAT I INTEND TO SAW YOU IN HALF... THEN PUT YOU BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!

YOU...YOU CAN'T DO THAT! THAT'S ALL A TRICK!

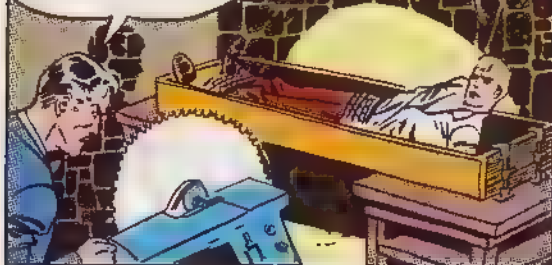


DO I NOT KNOW THAT? THERE IS A BOTTOMLESS BOX USED, WITH A PLATFORM WITH A DETACHABLE DOOR TO IT, SO THAT THE PERSON TO BE SAWED IN HALF CAN DROP DOWN TO SAFETY, LEAVING THE FEET AND HEAD EXPOSED! BUT THAT IS...TRICKERY!



I AM NOT A STAGE TRICKSTER! I AM A MAGICIAN! I WILL REALLY SAW YOU IN HALF...THEN BY MAGIC, WILL RESTORE YOU TO COMPLETENESS!

NO...NO! YOU'LL MURDER ME...KILL ME!



AS THE RAIN PELTED DOWNWARD, IT BATHED THE GRUMPLED FORM OF ALICE CRANE WHERE SHE LAY HUDDLED ACROSS A CLIFF-GROWING TREE...

NOUSE HURRYING! JIM'S... DEAD...BY NOW! BUT MAYBE I CAN GET THE POLICE...PUT THAT MAD FIEND...BEHIND BARS!



SOON NOW, THE WORLD WILL RECOGNIZE THE GREATNESS OF PETAJA! SOON, THEY WILL BEHOLD THE MIRACLE OF A MAN SAWED IN HALF... AND PUT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!



EVEN AS THE ROTATING SAW BIT DEEP INTO THE WOODEN BOX, JUST AS IT WAS ABOUT TO DIG INTO HIS SIDE...JIM CRANE FAINTED...

TERRIBLE NIGHT! LIGHTNING MIGHT EVEN HIT ME...PUT AN END TO ME... JUST AS... POOR JIM! SOB! SOB!



REFRESHED AND STRENGTHENED BY THE RAIN SHE STAGGERED DOWN THE CLIFFSIDE, AND ALONG A COUNTRY ROAD...

THAT'S RIGHT! I KNOW IT'S A CRAZY STORY, BUT SHE'S SCARED BAD! BETTER GET SOME STATE TROOPERS HERE RIGHT AWAY!

SOB-- SOB-- JIM'S DEAD! KILLED BY THAT MADMAN!



AN HOUR LATER, IN A FARMER'S KITCHEN...

A LIVE WIRE! I'LL REPORT IT, SOON AS WE GET TO THAT HOUSE!



IF YOU CAN SHOW US THE HOUSE, WE'LL INVESTIGATE.

PERHAPS YOU'RE A LITTLE OVER- WROUGHT. IF YOU GOT SOME SLEEP...

OH, I KNOW YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, BUT STOP TALKING. JUST COME WITH ME. I'LL PROVE IT TO YOU!



JIM! YOU'RE . YOU'RE SAFE! OH, MERGIFUL HEAVEN!

POLICE! YOU'LL NEVER TAKE ME . ALIVE!



YOU STUPID FOOLS! NO ONE APPRECIATES MY GENIUS!

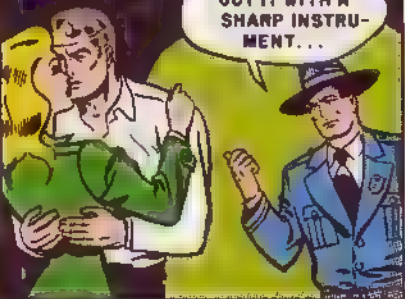
STOP HIM! HE'S GOING TO JUMP!



I THOUGHT YOU WOULD BE DEAD, DARLING. YET YOU'RE ALIVE!

THE SAW WAS JUST ABOUT TO TOUCH ME WHEN THE POWER FAILED! THE ELECTRIC CURRENT FAILED SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE!

THAT LIVE WIRE THAT WE SAW... THAT WAS IT! SOMEBODY MUST HAVE CUT IT WITH A SHARP INSTRUMENT...



PETAJA HAD A KNACK OF CUTTING THINGS IN HALF. GIRLS ON THE STAGE... MEN IN THIS CELLAR... LIGHT COMPANY WIRES AND NOW... HIMSELF!

HE LANDED ON A METAL FENCE. IT CUT HIM RIGHT IN TWO!



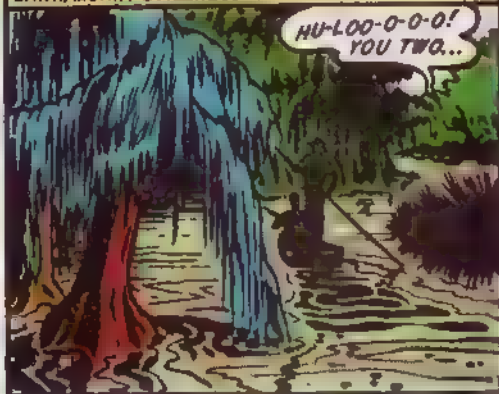
PERHAPS YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD THE LEGENDS ABOUT THE OKEFENOKEE SWAMP... HOW MEN HAVE GONE INTO THAT 40 MILE STRETCH OF BOGS, QUICK-SAND, WATER, AND OVERGROWTH AND NEVER CAME OUT! HERE IS THE *REAL* STORY BEHIND THESE LEGENDS!

THE THING IN THE SWAMP!



A
SCIENTIFIC
SUSPENSE STORY

AS THE TWO MEN IN THE FLATBOTTOM BOAT GLIDE SLOWLY UPSTREAM, DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE HEART OF THE DREADED OKEFENOKEE SWAMP... THE DARK, MURKY STILLNESS IS SUDDENLY SHATTERED...



HU-LOO-O-O-O!
YOU TWO...

LOOK, SAM! THAT OLD
GUY ON THE BANK IS
WAVING TO US...

COME ASHORE! DON'T
GO ON ANY FURTHER!
I BEG YOU...



LET'S GO OVER AND SEE WHAT HE'S RAVING ABOUT! HE LOOKS TERRIFIED!

OKAY, SAM!

PLEASE! DON'T GO PAST THIS SPOT... PLEASE! PLEASE!

WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, OLD MAN?

YOU MUSTN'T GO ON INTO THE SWAMP! YOU'LL NEVER COME OUT ALIVE IF YOU DO!

LOOK, STRANGER! WE'VE HEARD ALL ABOUT THIS SWAMP! ALL ABOUT PEOPLE WHO GO INTO IT AND ARE NEVER SEEN AGAIN!

...BUT WE THINK IT'S ALL NONSENSE! I'VE MAPPED OUR TRIP SO FAR! IT'LL BE A SIMPLE MATTER TO RETRACE OUR STEPS...

NONSENSE, EH? GENTLEMEN! I WARN YOU! THE LEGEND OF THE OKEFENOKEE IS *REAL!* I KNOW! YOU'LL NEVER COME OUT ALIVE... UNLESS YOU LET ME GUIDE YOU!

OH, I GET IT NOW! LOOKIN' FOR A FAST BUCK ... THAT'S ALL!

NO! NO! YOU'RE WRONG! I'LL DO IT FOR NOTHING!

JUST WHAT *IS* IT IN THIS SWAMP THAT PEOPLE ARE SO AFRAID OF?

ONLY I KNOW WHAT IT ACTUALLY IS...

TELL US, OLD MAN! WHAT IS IT?

COME INTO MY SHACK... AND I'LL RELATE THE WHOLE STORY...

THE OLD MAN LEADS THE OTHER TWO INTO HIS CRUDE HUT / THEY SEAT THEMSELVES ON ROUGHLY HEWN CHAIRS / THEN THE OLD ONE BEGINS TO SPEAK...

ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, THREE PEOPLE CAME TO THIS PART OF THE OKEFENOKEE... THREE SCIENTISTS / ONE WAS MIDDLE-AGED, ONE WAS A YOUNG WOMAN, HIS DAUGHTER, AND THE THIRD... A YOUNG MAN... THE GIRL'S FIANCEE...



THEY HAD A DREAM, THESE THREE! THEY WERE GOING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM THAT HAD BAFLED SCIENCE FOR CENTURIES! THEY WERE GOING TO SOLVE THE SECRET OF LIFE...!

BUT, WHY THIS GOD-FORSAKEN PLACE, FATHER? HERE, WE CAN WORK UNDISTURBED BY OUTSIDERS, MARIE! NO PUBLICITY... NO REPORTERS... NO PRYING EYES!



YES, MARIE! AFTER ALL, WE WOULD RECEIVE A GREAT DEAL OF CRITICISM! TO *CREATE* LIVING MATTER... TO *CREATE* LIFE... IS SOMETHING THAT IS CONSIDERED BEYOND THE REALM OF SCIENCE...

SO YOU SEE, MARIE, WE MUST SEPARATE OURSELVES FROM SOCIETY... AT LEAST FOR A WHILE...



"AND SO, PROFESSOR CARL WARD, MARIE WARD AND ROBERT COLBY SET TO WORK, BUILDING A LABORATORY... HERE... HERE IN THE OKEFENOKEE...

AT LAST... WE ARE FINISHED!

NOW WE CAN UNPACK OUR EQUIPMENT... ALL OUR APPARATUS... AND BEGIN OUR WORK!

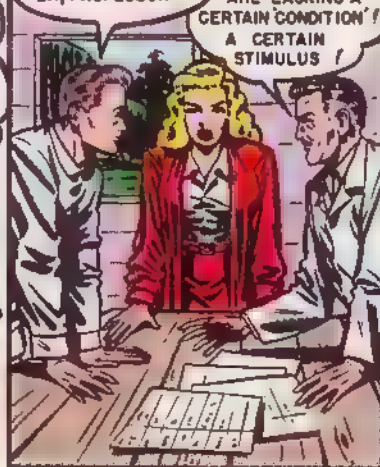


* THEIR EXPERIMENTING BEGAN... *

WE *KNOW* WHAT PROTOPLASM... LIVING TISSUE... CONTAINS! WE HAVE ANALYZED IT AND WE KNOW *EVERY* CHEMICAL... IN ITS *PROPER PROPORTION*! AND YET... WHEN WE PLACE THEM TOGETHER... COMBINE THEM. THEY DO NOT BEGIN TO... TO... *LIVE*! THERE IS ONE 'ELEMENT' MISSING...

THE SPARK OF LIFE, EH, PROFESSOR?

EXACTLY! WE ARE LACKING A CERTAIN CONDITION! A CERTAIN STIMULUS!



PERHAPS... ELECTRICITY, FATHER? PERHAPS IF WE *SHOCKED* THIS COMBINATION OF COMPOUNDS AND ELEMENTS... THE LIVING PROCESS WOULD *BEGIN*...

WE WILL TRY IT, MARIE! WE WILL TRY EVERYTHING! THE CONDITION OR STIMULANT IS WHAT WE *MUST* DISCOVER...

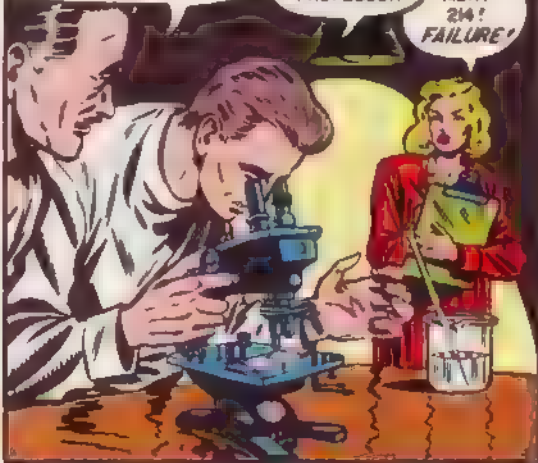


"IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED THEY TRIED EVERYTHING"

"THIS TIME WE'LL TRY 004 MICRO-VOLTS! IF IT DOESN'T WORK ELECTRICITY AS WE KNOW IT IS NOT THE ANSWER! READY?"



"WHAT DO YOU SEE, ROBERT? NO SIGN OF LIFE, PROFESSOR! EXPERIMENT 214! FAILURE!"



"FOR FOUR LONG MONTHS THE THREE SCIENTISTS WORKED...TRIED FAILED" X-RAY 10,000 VOLTS! EXPERIMENT 102 FAILURE!"



"RADIUM EXPOSURE 3 SECONDS AT 2 INCHES" EXPERIMENT 1045 FAILURE!"

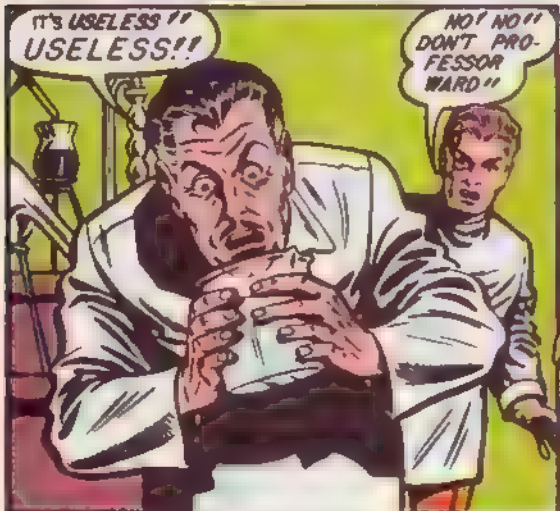


"INFRA-RED! URANIUM! FAILURE! ULTRA-VIOLET! FAILURE!! HIGH-FREQUENCY SOUND-WAVES. FAILURE!!"

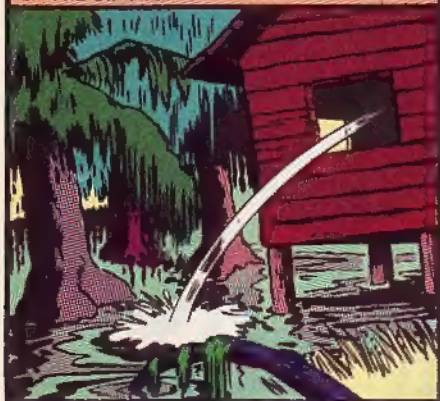


"IT'S USELESS!! USELESS!!"

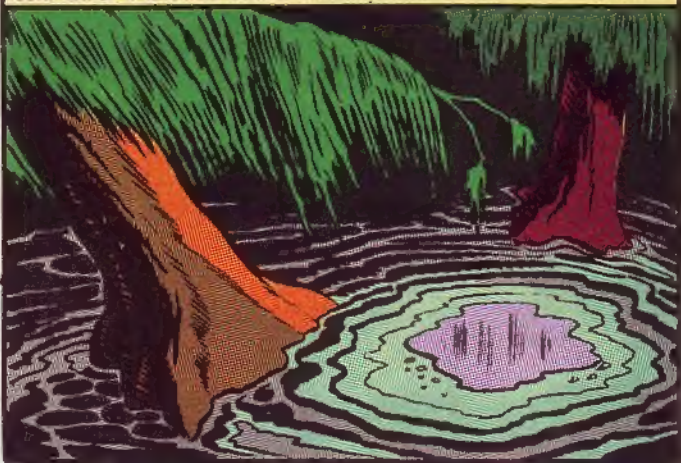
"NO! NO! DON'T PROFESSOR WARD!"



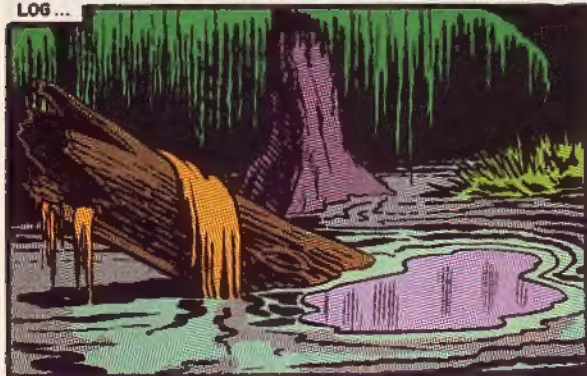
"IN A FIT OF RAGE, PROFESSOR WARD HAD FLUNG THE BEAKER CONTAINING THEIR PRECIOUS COMBINATIONS OF CHEMICALS THROUGH THE WINDOW INTO THE STAGNANT, MURKY WATERS OF THE SWAMP...



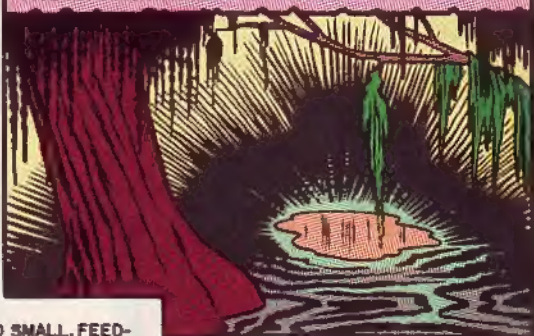
"SLOWLY THE BEAKER SANK...AND THE MIXTURE SPREAD OVER THE SURFACE OF THE STILL WATER...



"LAZILY...IT DRIFTED ALONG...COMING TO REST NEAR A ROTTED LOG ...



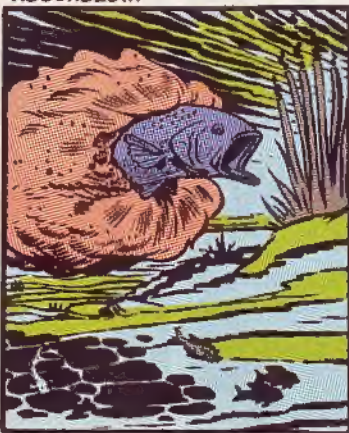
"AND THEN...IT **HAPPENED!** THERE, IN THE DANK, DARK WATERS OF THE SWAMP...IN THE HEAT...AND THE STENCH...AND THE DAMPNESS...IT **HAPPENED!** UNKNOWN...UNEXPLAINED...THE CONDITION THAT **THEY** HAD TRIED FOR FIVE LONG MONTHS TO CREATE...CAME ABOUT...



"IT **LIVED!** THE SMALL MIXTURE OF CHEMICALS AND BASIC ELEMENTS BEGAN TO **LIVE!** A SIMPLE FORM OF LIFE...WITH NO STRUCTURE! JUST A SHAPELESS, AMOEBA-LIKE MASS OF LIVING PROTOPLASM!



"AT FIRST, IT REMAINED SMALL, FEEDING ON MICROSCOPIC ORGANISMS! BUT THEN, AS IT GREW...LARGER AND LARGER...IT SEEKED LARGER FOOD... SMALL FISH...INSECTS! IT ENVELOPED THEM... AS AN AMOEBA DOES...SECRETING DIGESTIVE JUICES THAT DISSOLVE THE VICTIMS INTO A FORM MORE EASILY **ABSORBED!**



"AND STILL IT GREW, UNCONTROLLED, BIGGER...BIGGER! IT MOVED ABOUT NOW... OUT OF THE WATER ONTO THE LAND...ENVELOPING AND ABSORBING EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH...



"MEAWHILE, PROFESSOR WARD AND HIS DAUGHTER HAD MET WITH A NEW PROBLEM! ROBERT GOLBY!"

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, COLBY?
EXACTLY WHAT I MEAN! I'M QUITTING! THIS...THIS THING WE'RE TRYING TO DO...! IT'S...IT'S...WRONG!



A SCIENTIST...TALKING LIKE THAT! WHAT'S COME OVER YOU, GOLBY?

I...I DON'T KNOW! ONLY I'M GETTING OUT... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE...



ARE YOU COMING WITH ME, MARIE?
BUT...BUT...BOB!



YOU SEE, MARIE! HE'S TURNED OUT TO BE A SNIVELING COWARD! GO ON...COLBY...GET OUT! A TRUE SCIENTIST IS NEVER AFRAID...OF ANYTHING!



ARE YOU COMING, MARIE?
MY PLACE IS HERE, ROBERT... WITH MY FATHER... AND OUR WORK! YOU'D BETTER GO...



GOLBY TURNED AND LEFT! HE CROSSED THE RICKETY WALK FROM THE HOUSE OVER THE SWAMP TO THE BANK! SUDDENLY HE HEARD A TERRIFIED SCREAM...



WHAT HE SAW MADE HIS BLOOD FREEZE...HIS HAIR STAND ON END! THE LABORATORY WAS COLLAPSING INTO A MASS OF QUIVERING WRITHING LIVING MATTER...



PROFESSOR WARD AND MARIE... BOTH SCREAMING HYSTERICALLY, WERE BEING SUCKED INTO THAT HUGE BLOB OF LIVING MATTER! HELPLESS TO DO ANYTHING, COLBY STOOD, TERRIFIED... WATCHING IT ALL...



...AS A FINAL MUFFLED CRY ECHOED THROUGH THE SILENT SWAMP... AND THE CLAWING, CLUTCHING HAND OF PROFESSOR WARD DISAPPEARED INTO THE RIPPLING MASS!



SO YOU SEE GENTLEMEN, THAT IS WHAT AWAITS YOU IN THE DEEP DARK DEPTHS OF THE OKEFENOKEE! THE LIFE THAT THEY HAD HELPED TO CREATE, AND THAT HAD DESTROYED PROFESSOR WARD AND HIS DAUGHTER, WAITS TO DESTROY YOU...



THAT'S QUITE A YARN, OLD TIMER, BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND, I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE...

YEAH! LET'S GO SAM!



REMEMBER, GENTLEMEN, I WARNED YOU! YOU SEE... MY NAME IS ROBERT COLBY!

SURE, OLD MAN... SURE!



THE TWO MEN PUSH THEIR FLATBOTTOM BOAT OUT INTO THE STREAM... THEIR LAUGHTER DRIFTING ACROSS THE STAGNANT SILENT WATER! SLOWLY, THEY MAKE THEIR WAY UPSTREAM! SUDDENLY...

COLBY! HE SAID HIS NAME WAS COLBY! THAT WAS THE NAME OF THE YOUNG SCIENTIST THAT ESCAPED... THE... THE... **SAM!! LOOK!!**

WHA...? WHY... NO... NO...

NO! IT'S... IT'S... THE... THING...



WELL, DEAR READERS! DID YOU LIKE THIS STORY? DID YOU LIKE THE OTHER STORIES IN THIS BOOK? WON'T YOU **VOTE** FOR YOUR FAVORITE SO WE CAN SEE THE **KIND OF STORIES YOU WANT?** WRITE US... AND TELL US WHICH ONE YOU LIKED BEST!

1. **THE WALL** (A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY)
2. **THE MAD MAGICIAN** (AN ADVENTURE IN HORROR)
3. **THE HOUSE OF HORROR** (A JOURNEY INTO THE SUPER-NATURAL)
4. **THE THING IN THE SWAMP** (A SCIENTIFIC SUSPENSTORY)

THE END





The Old Witch